

Copy (Excerpts)

Letter from Paul Hoch to Meagher, dated 9/25/70

Dear Sylvia,

If the draft report on the melon recoil experiment really did leave you thinking that I generally accepted the conclusions of the Warren Commission and rejected a conspiracy hypothesis, my writing skills must be even more deficient than I had feared. I am now working on a major revision of that paper, which will spell out the distinction between what has been proved (that the laws of Newtonian mechanics do not imply that the backward motion itself means the shot came from the front) and my own opinion (that there is no persuasive evidence of a shot from the front). I would welcome your assessment of the medical evidence on this point. I will respond to the specific comments in your letter of August 31 (except for the personal insults) when I send you this revised version. Don't worry, I do know the difference between a head and a melon.

I appreciate your observation that the publication of an analysis of any single point, no matter how important, carries the implication that the Commission can be vindicated by the fact that the critics were wrong on that point--regardless of any disclaimers in the paper itself. If this were my work alone, I would write it up for the critics, but not try to get it published. This is, however, mainly Alvarez' work--certainly his idea--and he thinks it should be published. Any article he submits would be in his name alone. At this time I don't see how any reasonably short article could present the results in such a way that they would not be massively distorted by the press ("Nobel Laureate Confirms Warren Report"), and I will emphatically present my views to him. I do thank you for your comments and am taking them very seriously.

(Paragraph on an unrelated
matter omitted)

I gather I didn't make my opinions on conspiracy, the Commission, and Oswald clear when we met. I think the main difference between our views is that I suspect Oswald was knowingly involved in conspiratorial activities with the (other??) assassins before the 22nd. I read Bonner's book after Newman's, and I think Sgt. Hill's story is about as much of a confession as we are about to get. If all that happened today, I wouldn't doubt that the DFD framed Oswald. I reread what you wrote in Accessories about a pre-existing DFD file on Oswald, and as I look around I find even more evidence of its existence. For example, the reports in CE 1409 seem just too detailed to represent the recollection of the officers after 1 year; they look like slightly revised versions of contemporaneous reports.

If you feel that you could tell me who in Dallas mentioned my alleged pro-Commission views to you, I would like to consider the possibility that he was deliberately misled. (That sounds paranoid, I know, but I am quite curious.)

Sincerely,

Paul

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